

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

26th District Report

Fall 2001

Representative **Pat Lantz**



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Dear Neighbor,

The September 11th attack on America has changed everything except our values. Basic issues such as public safety and public health must now be reexamined in light of threats that seemed unimaginable just a few months ago.

Our economy and state budget situation have also been hurt by the crisis, with sharp reductions in expected revenues. As your representatives, we strongly believe that reducing spending – not raising taxes – is the best approach to balancing the state budget.

This means we must reexamine budget priorities and find ways to cut state spending that do not harm our schools, public safety, or our basic values. Clearly, we face hard choices. You can help us to make the best possible choices for our 26th District communities and residents by answering the enclosed questionnaire and returning it as quickly as possible. Hearing from you will help us speak for you as key decisions are made.

This newsletter also includes information about how our state is working to increase public safety—while preserving our civil liberties—as we face the current crisis.

We are very proud of how our local communities are responding to the crisis. Our sense of unity and resolve is greater than at any time since World War II. Make no mistake: history will one day record that we rose to this challenge as Americans have always risen to great challenges, and that we emerged from these difficult times stronger than ever.

Sincerely,


Patricia Lantz


Brock Jackley

PUBLIC SAFETY:

Many of us are feeling insecure in the aftermath of the recent terrorist attacks. This insecurity is revealing itself in our reluctance to travel and our desire to stay home with our families. In state government we are working to strengthen everyone's sense of security by paying careful attention to the agencies and programs designated to respond to a crisis.

Emergency Operations Center

Fortunately, we have not experienced a tragedy comparable to the attacks on New York and Washington, DC. But we did learn much about how our state is able to respond to a crisis during last February's earthquake.

On that nerve-racking day last February 28th, the state's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) at Camp Murray kicked into action within minutes, bringing together 150 employees from state agencies and the National Guard to coordinate the state's response. The EOC performed admirably that day and in the days to follow. The staff was able to rapidly collect information about what public facilities were closed, which highways and roads were severely damaged, and where citizens could turn for help.

We will continue to work to ensure that the EOC is prepared to handle any crisis that may confront our state.

OPERATING BUDGET:

The recent terrorist attacks have further damaged our already-slumping economy in Washington state. Some of the hardest-hit areas include the aerospace sector, tourism, and the airline industry. These circumstances have also impacted other areas of our economy, resulting in more layoffs and falling revenue for the state. The result is economic uncertainty for many workers and a tightening state budget. The latest revenue forecast, developed before the September 11 attacks, reduced state revenues by about \$100 million. The November forecast is likely to increase that shortfall by between \$200 million and \$800 million. No one could have foretold this economic loss.

The governor has already called on the six largest state agencies to propose cuts amounting to 15 percent of each

Bremerton Readiness Center

Last year we set in motion an important emergency response project dedicated to preparing firefighters, paramedics, and law enforcement officers to deal with emergencies. The Bremerton Readiness Center is an emergency response training facility that will be used collaboratively by the U.S. Navy, the Kitsap County Fire District, area police officers, and the National Guard. This multi-agency effort will be critical in ensuring that the people charged with ensuring public safety are adequately trained to deal with an emergency.

Department of Health

The Department of Health is working very closely with the State Military Department's Emergency Management Division and the Washington State Patrol to prepare for any health hazard. The agency is also in regular contact with federal officials at the Department of Health and Human Services in Washington, DC. The department has had several years to prepare for any major health problem, serving as part of an anti-terrorism council of state officials formed two years ago.

For more information about the Washington State Department of Health's preparations for any health emergencies, visit the department's website at <http://www.doh.wa.gov/>.



agency's budget. These agencies include the departments of Social & Health Services, Corrections, Community, Trade and Economic Development, Health, Ecology, and Fish and Wildlife. The cuts will have a real effect on services for seniors, the disabled, health care programs, parks, and other important state services. It is our goal to trim this budget in a way that does not harm our citizens, jeopardize public safety, or worsen our economic condition. At the same time, we will be looking for ways to assist workers who have been hurt by the economic downturn.

This session we will maintain our many efforts to help government operate more efficiently. We urge you to help us do this by providing your thoughts about state programs that you want to trim or protect.

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TRANSPORTATION:

All of us have felt the impacts of traffic congestion — whether arriving late for work or missing an appointment or showing up late for dinner. Last session we tried to address our state's debilitating traffic problems.

Long-term transportation plan

We succeeded in passing several measures to save taxpayers money by streamlining the permitting process and simplifying the design and construction of transportation projects. Unfortunately, we failed to pass a long-term transportation plan to address our many urgent transportation needs. The meltdown stemmed from a dispute over whether to directly pass a revenue increase for transportation or send the proposal to a public vote.

Despite the implementation of reforms and accountability measures we have put in place in recent years, our transportation needs far outweigh the level of funding we are currently providing. In fact, over the next twenty years we are looking at a shortfall on the order of \$30-\$40 billion for transportation projects. The question remains as to how we proceed from here. We, your 26th District representatives, urge you to give us your opinions about passing a transportation plan and we welcome any thoughts you may have about this critical issue.

Narrows Bridge

The future of the Narrows Bridge remains uncertain. We will continue to fight for a plan that treats West Sound motorists fairly. Unfortunately, many of our fellow legislators simply want to rush this project through without regard to how it treats those of us who use the bridge every day.

Our goal remains passing a plan that uses public financing to fund construction of the bridge, thus guaranteeing the lowest possible cost to motorists and taxpayers. We will continue to push for this as the most fair and equitable means of financing this bridge. We hope you will support us on this.



QUESTIONNAIRE

1) Due to falling state revenues the state will have to cut services during the next budget session. In what areas do you think we should reduce spending?

2) Keeping in mind the recent terrorist attacks, what measures should the state take to prepare for any future emergencies?

3) What are your biggest complaints about transportation? (1 = most serious problem, 7 = least serious problem)?

- ☐ Not enough mass transit service in my area
- ☐ Not enough lanes
- ☐ Inadequate ferry service
- ☐ HOV lanes not available to all drivers
- ☐ Potholes, poor road conditions
- ☐ On ramps and off ramps that are too short for traffic to merge without backups
- ☐ Inadequate park and ride lots
- ☐ Other: _____

4) What transportation reforms make good sense to you? Check those reforms that you like.

- ☐ Make the governor, instead of the Transportation Commission, accountable for transportation.
- ☐ Transportation taxes that are raised locally should be spent locally.
- ☐ Use measurable benchmarks to get higher performance in the Department Of Transportation.
- ☐ Prioritize projects to address the worst traffic chokepoints.
- ☐ Encourage more carpooling, staggered work schedules and more mass transit alternatives.
- ☐ Other reforms: _____

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Representative Pat Lantz • Representative Brock Jackley

5) Would you be willing to pay \$12 dollars per month in higher transportation taxes, mainly on gasoline, to pay for a statewide transportation solution that includes \$6 billion in highway improvements, passenger and freight rail, better bus service and new ferries?

____ Yes ____ No

6) Please write any additional comments in the space provided.

Please cut out this questionnaire and mail to:

Representative Pat Lantz
Representative Brock Jackley
P.O. Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504-0600




The U.S.S. Carl Vinson (pictured) and U.S.S. Sacramento, based in Bremerton, are protecting our country in Operation Enduring Freedom. Please support the men and women who defend our way of life.

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